

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 OTTAWA 000679

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAN, WHA/PDA
WHITE HOUSE PASS NSC/WEUROPE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ; NORTH KOREA

IRAQ

1. "Liberating Iraqis is main justification for war" Columnist Rosie DiManno writing from Jordan made the following observations in the liberal Toronto Star (3/10): "The most urgent and compelling reason for invading Iraq is the one never mentioned by bickering diplomats at the United Nations: 24 million Iraqis, 24 years of barbarous misrule, government by thuggery.... But world leaders are pragmatic and utterly selfish, with a keen eye to geopolitical interests, even as they invest themselves with noble motives - all this duplicitous keening about avoiding a catastrophic war. That might be what drove millions of people around the world to protest against war in Iraq, but it has precious little to do with the bellicose objections in Washington, Paris, Beijing, and let's throw in Berlin, which at least can honestly attest to the disastrous consequences of military belligerence. The Germans have been chastened into an appreciation for peace and diplomacy.... There are a multitude of reasons for attacking Iraq. It's to the United States' discredit that U.S. President George W. Bush has done such a poor job of itemizing them. He botched the rightness of war by only latterly addressing the liberation of Iraqis, which should have been first on the list, and which British Prime Minister Tony Blair has managed to put at the centre of his war threat. Washington has cast about for validations of war: first it was about protecting American security from Saddam's nasty weapons cache; then it was about the security of Israel, then the security of the region, then Saddam's alleged links to Al Qaeda, and finally a stunning democratization of the Mideast, starting in Baghdad. No wonder the public's confused, credulous.... I don't understand why liberating Iraqis - Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, Christians, Turkomans - from despotic tyranny has such little moral traction. I don't understand why the basic human values so precious to Canadians are deemed a luxury too taxing for the international community to deliver to Iraq. I don't understand the U.N.'s continuing tolerance of rogue regimes, so long as they don't export tyranny beyond their borders. I don't understand why the Iraqi people matter so little."

2. "War against Iraq senseless"

Columnist Tom Brodbeck stated in the conservative tabloid Winnipeg Sun (3/10): "It's one thing for the United States and their so-called coalition of the willing to argue that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is a menace to the world who ought to be extinguished. It's quite another for them to bomb Baghdad without the approval of the United Nations and argue they're doing so to enforce a series of broken UN resolutions. That's hypocrisy in its purest form. If the U.S. and others feel they have enough justification to declare war against Iraq, whatever that justification may be, nobody can really stop them. But I wish they wouldn't insult my intelligence by telling me they're doing so to enforce a series of UN resolutions.... The UN passes resolutions all the time. But they have rules on how those resolutions should be enforced. They have a Security Council with voting members who have the sole authority to enforce those resolutions. Anyone else, including a 'coalition of the willing,' who tries to enforce them is not enforcing UN resolutions, they are acting outside the UN. You can't have it both ways. You can't say you're enforcing UN resolutions and then spit in the eye of the institution that created them. It's one of the many deficiencies in the pro-war argument. Another major flaw is the argument that Iraq is 'linked' to terrorist cells, whatever that means.... But when asked for evidence that Iraq was behind 9/11, the White House always fails to deliver.... It's perhaps that assertion that erodes Bush's credibility more than any other. When you don't have a strong case for action, you reach. And George W. is reaching.... The bottom line today, though, is that nothing is going to happen overnight in Iraq, except for a possible U.S.-led war.... The United Nations is combing through Iraq looking for and actively destroying arms. UN chief inspector Hans Blix is reporting continued progress and co-operation. The eye of the world is on Iraq and they

can't attack anyone or really do anything. They're incarcerated.

Under these circumstances, I don't know how any logical thinking person could in good conscience approve of military action against Iraq, killing tens of thousands of innocent people, creating an explosively dangerous environment in the Persian Gulf and substantially increasing the threat of terrorism in the United States. It simply makes no sense."

13. "Arrogant Bush sets stage for final U.N. showdown" Editorial page editor Haroon Siddiqui suggested in the liberal Toronto Star (3/9) that, "George W. Bush has brought the world to the brink of one war and plunged it into another: the war that he is hell-bent on unleashing on Iraq, and the other on the diplomatic front, where he has torpedoed the Atlantic alliance, undermined moderate Muslim allies and is about to sink the system of international law that has helped govern the world since World War II. For this, we can blame Saddam Hussein, of course, but also America - more precisely, the Bush administration. Its unmatched arrogance, staggering dishonesty and extraordinary incompetence at international relations have set the stage for the coming week's showdown, not between enemies but friends.... Since last week, the Bush mission has also been about establishing democracy in Iraq and liberating Iraqis from Saddam's tyranny - the strongest moral point in the American arsenal but totally ineffective in light of its own past patronage of the tyrant, its callous discounting of Iraqi suffering under economic sanctions and the fact that its bombs will kill many Iraqis before freeing them. American disdain for international law is also on display in the stepped-up bombing of Iraqi defences in and around the north and south no-fly zones.... So, the war has begun before it has begun.... Meanwhile, the simplest and the most profound questions remain unanswered: Why war now, especially when it lacks international legitimacy, both in law and in the court of world public opinion? Why abandon the inspections precisely when they are beginning to work? Why risk the entire U.N. system? Why risk geopolitical upheaval? More importantly, why risk inflicting a humanitarian catastrophe on an already crushed people?"

14. "There must be a better 'bastard'" Former publisher Hartley Steward commented in the conservative tabloid Ottawa Sun (3/9): "Of all the bastards in the world available to hate these days, surely Americans are the least intelligent choice.... In fact, President Bush and his administration, in light of the Twin Towers attack, have shown surprising restraint. They have tried patiently to explain their intent to a world often reluctant to listen. They have painstakingly made their case. It is downright absurd to direct hatred toward the U.S. as if the world's only superpower could not be a victim. Absurd and transparently opportunistic. The new rules of war, the suicide bomber's and the terrorist's rationale that no one is innocent in war, make it entirely possible. It is so obvious, one is almost embarrassed to point it out: the real object of hatred here is Osama bin Laden and his Islamic extremists. We should save our curses for the madmen who flew airliners into the Trade Center towers, killing innocents who were doing nothing more than putting in a day's work. We should direct our animosity toward rogue states like Iraq who refuse to comply with UN disarmament orders; who thumb their noses at the free world. We should husband our hatred for the psychotic and brutal dictators who rule by fear and murder and employ poison gas against their own people. We should save our name-calling for those who seek and build weapons of mass destruction to let loose on the world. It is Saddam Hussein who is the bastard here."

15. "France is a true friend" Foreign affairs columnist Eric Margolis observed in the conservative tabloid Ottawa Sun (3/9): "...It seems at times that President Bush is even more eager to bomb Paris than Baghdad. In fact, the administration has been treating France like an enemy, rather than America's oldest ally and intimate friend. Neo-conservatives even accuse France of anti-Semitism, a disgusting slander. Far from being an enemy, France has been doing what a true good friend should do: telling Washington its policy is wrong and dangerous, unlike the handkissing leaders of Britain, Spain and Italy, who crave Bush's political support, or the East European coalition of the shilling, ex-communist politicians pandering to Washington for cash.... Bush's crusade against Iraq will go on with or without Turkey. The war will be akin to throwing a grenade into a huge hornet's nest. France, which lives next to the

Arab world and has 5 million Muslim citizens, warns an invasion and occupation of Iraq will roil the entire region, spark more terrorism, and hit Europe with a dangerous backblast. But Bush couldn't care less, as he would say. While Bush prepares war against demolished Iraq, he is ducking the surging nuclear confrontation with North Korea, which, unlike Iraq, truly threatens North America.... America's friends and neighbours, led by France, the mother of diplomacy, rightly warn the steroidal Bush administration to halt its rush to war. President Chirac and Foreign Minister de Villepin deserve the Nobel Peace Prize. Americans owe France an apology, and a hearty 'merci mon ami'."

16. "The damage done without a shot being fired"
Columnist Jeffrey Simpson remarked in the leading Globe and Mail (3/8): "...Those who believe that inspections are working and can produce additional positive results must concede the point: Inspections would fail without a credible threat of force. Or they would make such little progress as to mock the latest UN resolution's demand for 'immediate, active and unconditional' disarmament. You can't have one without the other, and it is naive to believe otherwise. Saddam Hussein's regime will never disarm, in whole or in part, without the threat of being toppled in a war.... The French and most of the world opposed military action because they feared its consequences; the Americans and their few allies supported such action because they feared the consequences of no action. Without a shot being fired, enormous damage has already been done to the transatlantic arrangements that stood these countries in such good stead for so many decades. To the Americans, it will seem axiomatic now that their great German friends and their perfidious French ones will play the anti-American card, so that neither they nor the disorganized European Union should be factored into future U.S. foreign policy decisions. Nor should the increasingly irrelevant NATO.... The more the United States feels itself abandoned, misunderstood and opposed by countries it had counted on as friends, the less it will reflect on what it has done to bring about this state of affairs than on the weakness, unreliability and fecklessness of those erstwhile friends whose support is not worth all the bother."

17. "A deadline fit for the Security Council"
The leading Globe and Mail editorialized (3/8): "...[I]sn't an ultimatum precisely what's necessary? Isn't the credible prospect of war precisely what is needed now to avoid it, by forcing an Iraqi change of heart?... Ultimately...the issue isn't a precise date. It is the need to bring this to a head. Mr. Hussein's game of cat-and-mouse cannot be allowed to continue. And the U.S. and British troops cannot remain indefinitely in a state of battle readiness. The members of the UN Security Council came together last November and unanimously passed Resolution 1441. They should come together again early next week and pass the resolution giving Mr. Hussein a final deadline of March 17. War may still be the outcome. But, if so, Mr. Hussein will have been given every chance to avoid it."

18. "The hawks of Iraq"
The conservative National Post opined (3/8): "...We concede there are real arguments for opposing war - though we do not find them convincing. Peaceniks, however, should resist the urge to use Saddam's victims as props. It is ordinary Iraqis who have the most to gain from a U.S.-led invasion, and the most to lose should war opponents get their way."

19. "Enough of the weasel words."
The conservative tabloid Ottawa Sun declared (3/8): "...[L]et's give Saddam one last, last chance - an 18th resolution giving him until March 17 to disarm - only 11 days sooner than the March 28 deadline in the 'Canadian compromise.' But then the UN must show whether it is relevant. If Saddam chooses not to comply, then we believe that even if the war resolution fails to gather the necessary nine of 15 Security Council votes, or if France, China or Russia vetoes it, then the U.S. and Great Britain should lead a coalition of willing nations to disarm Saddam. He is a tyrant. He terrorizes his own people. He has attacked three neighbours. He has pursued weapons of mass destruction. He supports terrorists and terrorism. Should he supply chemical or biological weapons to terrorists, the world will see a horror that would dwarf 9/11. Back down now and the UN will send a message to tyrants and terrorists everywhere that it is open season on the rest of us. Time to decide."

NORTH KOREA

10. "They could be on their own"

Editor emeritus Peter Worthington wrote in the conservative tabloid Ottawa Sun (3/10): "...This may sound ingenuous, but what America should do seems obvious. Dealing with North Korea is even simpler than dealing with the South. There's growing unrest in South Korea against the U.S. military presence which, since the ceasefire in the war 50 years ago, has protected the South from the North.... Some think America should forget about Saddam Hussein and concentrate on bringing North Korea to heel. That said, the nasty anti-American demonstrations in South Korea demanding the U.S. military leave are upsetting.... What's hard to understand is why the Americans stay if South Koreans want them gone. True, the majority want American troops handy and know the North is up to no good, but the massive protests that lambaste the U.S. must irritate the hell out of Americans. If I were President George Bush, I'd be tempted to say to South Korea - publicly and bluntly - that if you want us gone, we'll go; you work out what you can with your fruitcake neighbour. That'd panic South Koreans, and restore common sense.... Although North Korea's nuclear weapons program is no direct threat to America, selling nuclear technology to rogue regimes and terrorists is. This is all Kim Jong-il has to sell.... North Korea wants - demands - direct negotiations with the U.S., which, in turn, prefers multinational talks that include Russia, China, Australia and Japan. Since Kim Jong Il reneges on agreements and his word means nothing, why talk? What North Korea wants is bribes and payoffs. Blackmail. All it has to barter are weapons and soldiers. North Korea has no allies, with the possible exception of Cuba's Fidel Castro.... The soft approach rarely works with tyrants. Once Saddam Hussein has been eliminated, North Korea should be duck soup, providing President Bush doesn't waver or waffle."

CELLUCCI